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## SPENSER'S ARRAIGNMENT OF THE ANABAPTISTS

There has been general agreement that the fifth book of the *Faerie Queene*, containing the legend of Artegall or of Justice, deals with contemporary political history, and illustrates the principles of justice as involved in England's Irish policy, in the execution of Mary, and in the armed opposition to Spanish oppression in the Netherlands. In an interesting study entitled *Spenser and British Imperialism*, Professor E. A. Greenlaw has recently attempted to apply the allegory in detail, and to support the thesis that "deeper than this allegorical treatment of contemporary events lies the exposition of a theory of government that makes the book one of the most remarkable productions of the time."<sup>1</sup>

It is the object of this paper not to discuss the book as a whole, but to offer an interpretation of the controversy between Artegall and the Gyant, which occurs in the latter part of the second canto. This canto Professor Greenlaw has treated only in a very general way, not attempting a specific interpretation of the political allegory. The theme of the canto is the subject of property rights, and the canto falls into two parts,—the first twenty-eight stanzas dealing with extortion, and the remaining twenty-six with communism.

The story is as follows: Artegall, attended by his grim body-guard, Talus, the man with the iron flail, meets a dwarf who tells him of a bridge hard by which is guarded by a Saracen, Pollente. This giant assaults travelers, be they rich or poor, fordoes them, and secures their possessions and property,

Having great Lordships got and goodly farmes,  
Through strong oppression of his powre extort;  
By which he stil them holds, and keepes with strong effort.

Beyond the bridge lies a castle, presided over by his daughter Munera, who uphoards all the ill-got gains. Artegall at once sets out to overcome this nefarious extortioner. At the bridge he engages the Saracen and, after both have been

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Philology*, IX, 347.

precipitated into the flood, finally succeeds in killing him. Thence the knight and his attendant seek the castle. Munera tries to stay their entrance by heaving down bags of gold, but to no avail, for the huge iron flail of Talus shatters the door. In vain does Munera, haled forth from her hiding beneath a heap of gold, plead for mercy with Talus,—

But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold,  
And eke her feete, those feete of silver trye,  
Which sought unrighteousness, and justice sold,  
Chopt off, and nayld on high, that all might them behold.

Then, after throwing the body into the stream, he burns to ashes the “mucky pelfe,”—

The spoile of peoples evill gotten good,  
The which her sire had scrap't by hooke and crooke,

and razes the castle.

So much for the first episode. Whatever specific political procedure, if any, Spenser may have in mind, it is evident that he is here condemning the injustice of extortion and ill-gotten gains. The counterpart occupies the latter half of the canto, in which those who deny all property rights are as roundly scored.

Proceeding on their way, Artegall and Talus at length draw near the sea. There they behold a great crowd of people, drawn from many nations, gathered around a giant, who, standing upon a rock, noisily boasts that, in the huge balances which he holds in his hand,—

All the world he would weigh equallie,  
If ought he had the same to counterpoys.  
For want whereof he weighed vanity,  
And fild his ballaunce full of idle toys:  
Yet was admired much of fooles, women and boys.

In his boastfulness he proclaims that he would weigh the earth and the sea, fire and air, heaven and hell,—

And looke what surplus did of each remaine,  
He would to his owne part restore the same again.

For why, he sayd they all unequall were,  
And had encroched upon others share,  
Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there)  
Had worne the earth, so did the fire the aire,  
So all the rest did others parts empaire.

And so were realms and nations run awry.  
 All which he undertooke for to repaire,  
 In sort as they were formed aunciently;  
 And all things would reduce unto equality.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke,  
 And cluster thicke unto his leasings vaine,  
 Like foolish flies about an hony crocke,  
 In hope by him great benefite to gaine,  
 And uncontrolled freedome to obtaine.

When Artegall sees how the giant misleads the people, he chides him severely, declaring that he is getting beyond his depth, for before one sets out to reform, he should know what was the original status of things. At the first all things were created by just measure and carefully balanced, the earth in the centre, the waters about it, the air above it. So doth heavenly justice reign that each body knows its own bounds and is without change.

But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,  
 We are not sure they would so long remaine:  
 All change is perillous, and all chaunce unsound.

In great wrath the giant asks if Artegall cannot see how inordinate things have become, the sea encroaching upon the land and the earth getting its increase at the expense of the dead.

Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie,  
 And make them leuell with the lowly plaine:  
 These towring rocks, which reach unto the skie,  
 I will thrust downe into the deepest maine,  
 And, as they were, them equalize againe.  
 Tyrants, that make men subject to their law,  
 I will suppress, that they no more may raine;  
 And Lordings curbe, that commons over-aw;  
 And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw.

Artegall replies by asking the giant how he can judge of unseen things when he so misdeems visible things, for no particle of the earth is destroyed by the sea and at death we merely return the dust which we borrowed at birth.

All in the powre of their great Maker lie:  
 All creatures must obey the voice of the most hie.

They live, they die, like as he doth ordaine,  
 Ne ever any asketh reason why.

The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine;  
The dales doe not the lofty hils envy.  
He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty;  
He maketh subjects to their powre obay;  
He pulleth downe, he setteth up on hy;  
He gives to this, from that he takes away.  
For all we have is his: what he list doe, he may.

. . . . .  
In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand,  
To call to count, or weigh his works anew,  
Whose counsels depths thou canst not understand.

To the giant's retort that he can weigh the lightest word, Artegall challenges him to weigh the false and the true, or the right and the wrong. The giant first tries to weigh the words, and then the qualities themselves, but "all the wrongs could not a little right downe way." In great rage the giant is about to break his balances when Artegall admonishes him not to be angry with them, since

In the mind the doome of right must bee;  
And so likewise of words, the which be spoken,  
The eare must be the ballance, to decree  
And judge, whether with truth or falshood they agree.

He then suggests that the giant put two wrongs in the balances, since they permit of comparison, and that the right sit on the beam of the balance; the giant, however, thrusts the right away, for he has no interest therein, but is solely bent on increasing or diminishing extremes. Seeing this, Talus shoves him into the sea.

That when the people, which had there about  
Long wayted, saw his sudden desolation,  
They gan to gather in tumultuous rout,  
And mutining, to stirre up civill faction,  
For certaine losse of so great expectation.  
For well they hoped to have got great good,  
And wondrous riches by his innovation.  
Therefore resolving to revenge his blood,  
They rose in armes, and all in battell order stood.

Not wishing to soil his hands with the base blood of this rabble, Artegall sends Talus to handle them. At first they assail him, but quickly disperse when he wields his flail. So much for the story.

In briefest terms, a hypocritical, loud-mouthed, muddle-

headed agitator, a demagogue parading under the banner of justice, by shouting communism and denouncing property rights, and by denying the validity of law and authority, attracts a rabble of shallow-pated malcontents drawn from different nations. He is challenged by Artegall, the personification of justice, who declares that sovereignty and property are divinely-ordained institutions, created and supported by the mysterious providence of God, that in human life as in nature there are compensations for every loss, and that the true and the false, the right and the wrong—in other words, good and evil—cannot be placed in the balance and weighed against each other. Finally, the monstrous mischief-maker is forcibly dumped into the sea, and his disciples, who cannot be appeased by gentler means, are quieted by force.

Before entering upon the interpretation of this allegory, it remains to quote, for purposes of reference, the somewhat similar passage from *Mother Hubberds Tale* (ll. 129-149), in which the fox suggests to the ape that, since one person has no more right to property than another, they walk about the world and live without occupation:

Thus therefore I advize upon the case,  
 That not to anie certaine trade or place,  
 Nor anie man we should ourselves applie:  
 For why should he that is at libertie  
 Make himselfe bond? Sith then we are free borne,  
 Let us all servile base subjection scorne;  
 And as we bee sonnes of the world so wide,  
 Let us our fathers heritage divide,  
 And chalenge to our selves our portions dew  
 Of all the patrimonie, which a few  
 Now hold in hugger mugger in their hand,  
 And all the rest doo rob of good and land.  
 For now a few have all, and all have nought,  
 Yet all be brethren ylike dearly bought:  
 There is no right in this partition,  
 Ne was it so by institution  
 Ordained first, ne by the law of Nature,  
 But that she gave like blessing to each creture  
 As well of worldly livelode as of life,  
 That there might be no difference nor strife,  
 Nor ought cald mine or thine .....

It must be evident that the allegory of Artegall and the

Gyant is no mere academic handling of the subject of communism; it is a scathing denunciation of it, in which the personal feeling of the author is sufficiently evident. Spenser here throws down his gage. If the subject had been regarded as merely theoretical, an answer to such speculative and idealistic exercises as Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia*, Spenser would have replied in the traditional vein of Aristotle, who held that the sense of possession is necessary to thrift and enterprise, is a source of keen pleasure, furnishes opportunities for the practice of temperance and liberality, and makes for harmony and real unity in the state.<sup>2</sup> (*Politics* II, 5.)

Was there, then, a party or sect, in the England of Spenser's day, who were regarded as obstreperous advocates of communism, and who were sternly suppressed? Assuredly there was; a sect whose contentions were generally supposed to be those stated in the allegory, against whom the very arguments were used that are employed in the poem, whose followers were drawn from different nations, who were thought to arouse the ignorant and the designing, and to check whom the English government was forced to expell the leaders across seas without ceremony and to threaten the residue with force. This sect was the Anabaptists.

I shall now present the proofs in detail, and try to substantiate the thesis that the latter part of this canto is an arraignment of the Anabaptists.

<sup>2</sup> There is, to be sure, a touch of Neo-Platonic philosophy in Artegall's criticism of the proposal of the giant to redispse the land and the sea. According to the Neo-Platonists, earth, sea, and air are held in their places and ruled by love, and the giant's proposal showed complete misunderstanding of the loving providence of God and of the divine principles governing the Universe. The Neo-Platonic view is thus expressed by Marsilio Ficino: "Ejusdem enim semper est affectionis et conservationis officium. Nempe similia similibus conservantur. Amor autem simile ad simile trahit. Terrae partes singulae amore mutuo copulante, ad partes alias terrae sui similes sese conservunt. Tota enim terra ad simile sibi mundi centrum illius aviditate descendit. Aquae partes ad sese invicem similiter et ad locum sibi convenientem cum toto aquae corpore servuntur. Idem partes aeris ignisque . . . ac etiam duo haec elementa ad supernam regionem sibi congruam et similem regionis illius amore trahuntur. Coelum etiam, ut Plato inquit, innato movetur amore."—*Commentarium in Convivium*, III, 2.

Citations without number might be given to show that it was generally believed that the Anabaptists, like the giant, though pretending to be reformers, were, in reality, stubborn sowers of dissension, distorting the Scriptures and tending to alienate the minds of men from each other and to dissolve the bonds of society through their denial of property rights, social distinctions, and civil and ecclesiastical authority. Two citations, however, may be taken as representative.

The first is from the pen of Bishop Hooper and was written in the time of King Edward VI: "For many times, as well heretofore as in our days, have been superstitious hypocrites and fanatical spirits, that have neglected and condemned the office of magistrates, judgments, laws, punishments of evil, lawful dominion, rule, lawful wars, and such like, without which a commonwealth may not endure. They have condemned also the ministry and ministers of Christ's church; and as for Christian society and charitable love, they confound. They use the ministry of the church so that it is out of all estimation, supposing themselves to be of such perfection, that they need neither the ministry of the word, neither use of Christ his holy sacraments, baptism and the supper of the Lord. And the other they use with such devilish disorder, that they would by a law make theirs their neighbors', and their neighbors' theirs, confounding all propriety and dominion of goods. . . . ."

"And now in our time, to the great trouble and unquietness of many commonwealths in Europe, the Anabaptists have resuscitated and revived the same errors: which is an argument and token of the devil's great indignation against civil policy and order. For he knoweth, where such errors and false doctrines of political orders be planted, two great evils necessarily must needs follow: the one is sedition, that bringeth murders, blood-shedding, and dissipations of realms; the other is blasphemy against Christ's precious blood; for these sects think they be able to save themselves of and by themselves."<sup>3</sup>

The second citation, chosen from Whitgift's *Answer to the*

<sup>3</sup> *Later Writings of Bishop Hooper*, Parker Society, p. 76.



*Admonition*, shows that this attitude toward the sect was quite unchanged a quarter of a century later. In the preface to this book, Whitgift states, "That because the common sort of persons, especially where the Gospel was preached, were so apt to embrace new-invented doctrines and opinions, though they tended to the disturbing the quiet of the Church, and the discrediting such as were in authority, and the maintaining of licentiousness and lewd liberty; he thought good therefore to set before their eyes the practices of the Anabaptists, their conditions and qualities, the kind and manner of their beginnings and proceedings, before the broaching of their manifold and horrible heresies: to the intent, that they, the Magistrates, might the rather in time take heed to such as proceeded in like manner: lest they being suffered too much, might burst out to work the same effect." The character then given to the Anabaptists is in part as follows: "That these Anabaptists had their private and secret conventicles, and did divide and separate themselves from the Church; neither would they communicate with such as were not of their sect, either in prayer, sacraments, or hearing the word. They counted all men as wicked and reprobate, that were not of their sect. They pretended in all their doings the glory of God, the edifying of the Church, and the purity of the Gospel. They earnestly cried out against pride and gluttony, &c. They spake much of mortification: they pretended great gravity: they sighed: they seldom or never laughed: they were very austere in reprehending: they spake gloriously, &c. Thereby they won authority among the simple and ignorant people. . . . They taught that the civil magistrate had no authority in ecclesiastical matters. . . . Their whole intent was to make a separation and a schism, and to withdraw men from their ordinary churches and pastors. . . . There was no stay in them; but they daily invented new opinions, and did run from error to error. They were very stubborn and wilful, which they called constancy. They were wayward and forward, without all humanity, judged and condemned all other men. They sought to overthrow commonwealths and states of government. They gave honour and reverence to none. And they used to speak to such as were in authority, without

any signification of honour. Neither would they call men by their titles, and answered churlishly; they attributed much unto themselves, and pleased themselves very well; but other men they contemned. . . . They sought to be free from all laws and to do what they listed. . . . The people had them in great admiration because of their hypocrisy and straitness of life.”<sup>4</sup> Such was the repute in which the Anabaptists were held, and it is precisely the character that Spenser gives the giant.

Again, the arguments employed by Artegall to refute the contentions of the giant are precisely those commonly employed against the teachings of the Anabaptists. Artegall refutes the communistic doctrines of the giant by declaring them opposed to God’s purpose and authority. This is the universal argument employed by Churchmen against this doctrine of the Anabaptists.

Thomas Rogers, in his *Exposition of the XXXIX Articles*, presents the view of the Church in the following condensed form:

“ARTICLE XXXVIII

“Of Christian men’s Goods, which are not common.

“The riches and goods of Christians (1) are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding (2) every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

“PROPOSITION I

“The riches and goods of Christians, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, are not common.

“THE PROOF FROM GOD’S WORD

“Against community of goods and riches be all those places (which are infinite) of holy scripture, that either condemn the unlawful getting, keeping, or desiring of riches, which, by covetousness, thievery, extortion, and the like wicked means, many do attain; or do commend liberality, frugality, free and friendly lending, honest labour, and lawful vocations

<sup>4</sup>Strype, *Life and Acts of Archbishop Whitgift*, I, 71.

to live and thrive by. All which do shew that Christians are to have goods of their own, and that riches ought not to be common.

“Of this judgment be the reformed churches.”<sup>5</sup>

Henry Bullinger in his *Decades*,<sup>6</sup> a work of great vogue in England, in discussing the eighth commandment maintains that the holding of property is supported by both the Old Testament and the New, though “There is no small number of that furious sect of Anabaptists, which deny this property of several possessions.” Bullinger’s evidence is in brief as follows: God gave Abraham property; God apportioned the promised land among the children of Isreal; Jesus commanded works of mercy and liberality, impossible under communism; Paul commanded laying up of alms; the early Christians sometimes sold their lands to relieve the necessity of their fellows, which could not have been done if they had not owned property; they broke bread from house to house, which implies that they had not renounced their possessions.<sup>7</sup>

As the Anabaptists based their doctrine of communism upon the supposed practice of the Apostolic Church, the discussion naturally centered around the early chapters of Acts. The orthodox contention is thus succinctly expressed by Thomas Cartwright: “For, I pray you, what community is spoken of either in the two, or three, or fourth of the Acts, which ought not to be in the church as long as the world standeth? Was there any community but as touching the use, and so far forth as the poor brethern had need of, and not to take every man alike? Was it not in any man his power to sell his houses, or lands, or not to sell them? When he had sold them, were they not in every man his liberty to keep the money to himself at his pleasure? And all they that were of the church did not sell their possessions, but those whose hearts the Lord

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Rogers, *The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England*, Parker Society, p. 352.

<sup>6</sup> *Decades of Henry Bullinger*, Parker Society.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 18. All such arguments are drawn from Melancthon, *Epist. adv. Anabap.*; Calvin, *Instruct. adv. Libertinos*. Bullinger also wrote a complete treatise on the subject: *Adv. Anabap.*

touched singularly with the compassion of the need of others, and whom God had blessed with abundance, that they had to serve themselves and help others; and therefore it is reckoned as a rare example that Barnabas the Cyprian and Levite did sell his possession and brought the price to the feet of the apostles.”<sup>8</sup>

The communistic doctrine was thus shown to be opposed to the social conditions allowed God’s chosen people under the Old Dispensation, and the members of his inspired Church under the New. As Artegall declares,

He gives to this, from that he takes away,  
For all we have is his: what he list doe, he may.

Again, the denial of temporal authority by the giant and by the fox, the boast of the giant that he would suppress tyrants and curb the nobility, are part and parcel of the supposed Anabaptist program and were condemned by Artegall on the same grounds as by the Churchmen. In a sermon preached at St. Paul’s on November seventeenth, 1583, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s coming to the throne, Archbishop Whitgift speaks as follows: “The second sort (of the disloyal) are the Anabaptists; who wil have no government at al. And they ground their heresy upon the fifth to the Galathians, *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free*. And again, *You are called unto liberty*.”<sup>9</sup> The fox was arguing from these very passages when he said,

For why should he that is at libertie  
Make himself bond? sith then we are free borne,  
Let us all servile base subjection scorne.

The words of Artegall,

He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty;  
He maketh subjects to their powre obay;

voice the attitude of the English Church, as of the Reformation in general. They correspond exactly to the first two divisions of this sermon, that obedience to magistrates is the express commandment of God, and that sovereignty exists by the ordinance of God. To quote again:

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *The Works of John Whitgift*, Parker Society, 1, 352. Cf. also *The Works of Bishop Hooper*, Parker Society, 2, 42.

<sup>9</sup> *Life and Acts of John Whitgift*, Parker Society, 3, 75.

“(1) The *commandment* of God is evident; by the first commandment of the second table: *Honour thy father and thy mother*.

“Christ himself paid tribute; and left it as a perpetual rule to al, *Give unto Caesar, &c. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers*: and *Obey those that are set over you*, saith his Apostle. And S. Peter, *Be subject to every humane ordinance for the Lord's sake*.

“*Yee must needs be subject*, saith S. Paul. *Oportet subjici*. Obedience is nothing indifferent: to be taken or shaken off at our own pleasure: but *for fear*, and for *conscience sake* also, as the same Apostle adds.

“If this charge were made by the Apostles when the magistrate was an infidel, and in the time of Nero, a cruel persecutor, how much more ought obedience be commanded now by us, and yielded by you, to a Christian magistrate, that saveth you from persecution.

“(2) It is the *ordinance* of God. The magistrate is appointed by God. He is his Vicar and Vicegerent. He giveth him his name; and title: *Vos dii estis*. I said, *Ye are gods*.

“*Dominus dat sceptrum, cui vult, et aufert*: i. e. God gives the sceptre to whom he wil, and takes it away.

“*Per me reges regnant*: i. e. By me Kings reign.

“*Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west. God setteth up and pulleth down* whom it pleaseth him.”<sup>10</sup>

The words of Artegall to the giant,

He pulleth downe, he setteth up on hy,

are the very words of the Proverb here employed in refuting the teachings of the Anabaptists.

Can there longer be any question that the giant represents the Anabaptists, and his noisy declarations, the Anabaptist cult?

The vain efforts of the giant to balance good and evil, I take to be a criticism of the supposed Anabaptist doctrine of salvation by works, the doctrine that close account is kept of a man's deeds and that his chance of salvation depends upon

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

having a snug balance on the right side of the ledger. The English Churchmen did not believe in any such system of divine bookkeeping. I think Spenser is saying, in terms of allegory, that we are justified by faith alone, and that it is idle to try to determine any man's claim upon God by balancing his good deeds over against his evil deeds. So dreadful is sin in the sight of God, so impotent is man by nature, that nothing but faith in Christ can be to him of any avail. Bishop Bale<sup>11</sup> classed the Anabaptists with the Papists because of this doctrine, and Thomas Rogers classed them with the Turks.<sup>12</sup>

It now remains to explain the action of Talus in shouldering the giant off the land into the sea. As a result of the persecutions in the Netherlands under Alva, a great many Anabaptists took shelter in England, and in the year 1568 their presence was considered so grave a menace that the following proclamation was issued against them: "The Queen's Majesty understanding that of late time sundry persons, being infected with certain dangerous and pernicious opinions, in matters of religion, contrary to the faith of the Church of Christ, as Anabaptists, and such lyke, are come from sundry parts beyond the seas into this her realme, and speciallye into the citie of London, and other maritime townes, under the colour and pretence of flying from persecution against the professors of the Gospel of Chryst: whereby if remedy be not speedily provided, the Church of God in this realme shall susteyne great daunger of corruption, and sects to increase contrary to the unitie of Chryst's Church here established.

"For redresse whereof, her Majestie, by advice of her Counsayle, having commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury, Byshop of London, and other Byshops to see the parishes in London, and other places herewith suspected, to be severely visited, and all persons suspected to be openly tried and examined, touching such phanatical and heretical opinions; willeth and chargeth all manner of persons born eyther in

<sup>11</sup> *Mystery of Iniquity*, Geneva, 1545, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> *The Catholic Doctrine*, p. 114.

forreigne parts, or in her Majesties dominions, that have conceived any manner of such heretical opinion as the Anabaptists do hold, and meaneth not by charitable teaching to be reconciled, to depart out of this realme within twenty days after this proclamation upon payne of forfeiture of all their goods and cattelles, and to be imprisoned, and further punished, as by the laws eyther ecclesiastical or temporal in such case is provided."<sup>13</sup>

I suggest that it was this harsh removal across seas of these troublesome sectarians that is figured forth in the precipitation of the giant into the sea. Twice before in Elizabeth's reign had like measures been taken, but they were not carried through so vigorously.

Such, then, do I take to be the allegory of Sir Artegall and the giant.

The canto as a whole is a definition of the correct theory of property by the elimination of wrong theories, and an exposition of the office of the true nobleman, the man of virtue (*ἀρετή*), in upholding economic justice. Extortion and communism are in equal violation of that divine law upon which justice is based, and it is the duty of the true knight, on the one hand to defend the poor against the greed of the plutocrat, and on the other, to defend property against the revolutionary folly of the communist. As succinctly expressed in the opening lines of the canto:

Nought is more honorable to a knight,  
Ne better doth beseeme brave chevalry,  
Than to defend the feeble in their right,  
And wrong redresse in such as wend awry.

In Book Two, Spenser had already condemned the greed for gold on the grounds of temperance, and had defined the attitude which the virtuous man should take toward riches. Sir Guyon, the knight of Temperance, in response to the temptations of Mammon, rejoins:

But I in armes, and in atchievements brave,  
Do rather choose my flitting houres to spend,  
And to be Lord of those, that riches have,  
Then them to have my selfe, and be their servile slave.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Strype, *Life and Acts of Archbishop Grindal*, 181.

<sup>14</sup> 2. 7. 33.

All that I need I have; what needeth mee  
To covet more, than I have cause to use? <sup>15</sup>

I have elsewhere tried to show that in matters ecclesiastical Spenser chose the golden mean; I think it is evident from the present study that he likewise inclined to the golden mean in the matter of riches.

It remains to be observed that this attitude is precisely that advocated by the Elizabethan divines. The condemnation of concupiscence in the first part of the canto, like the condemnation of communism in the second, runs parallel to the prevailing ecclesiastical thought. In the sermon on the eighth commandment, quoted above, Bullinger condemns extortion and the inordinate love of money with as much warmth as he condemns the communism of the Anabaptists. The prevailing attitude of the English Churchman is succinctly expressed in the words of the articles agreed upon in the convocation of 1552, and published by King Edward VI: "The riches and the goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, (as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast:) notwithstanding every man ought of such things, as he possesseth, to give alms to the poor, according to his ability." <sup>16</sup> Thus in this canto, as in the first book, Spenser identifies himself with current ecclesiastical thought.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Liturgies of King Edward VI*, Parker Society, p. 536.